

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending, including independent claims 1, 7, 11, and 16. All claims are gain rejected as anticipated by or obvious over the same prior art as before, with the primary reference being Renegar.

In view of the Examiner's reasoning (explained at pages 2-3 of the Office Action), it appears the rejections are being maintained primarily because:

1. The words "translator" and "translating" in the claims are interpreted by the Examiner in a way not intended by Applicant. The Examiner takes the position that these words commonly mean translating a word from one language into another language, although Applicant believes that the claim language itself and the application properly define the invention to be something different and more specific.
2. The claims describe the invention in terms of replacing "a character or string in an original text item." Apparently, the reference to replacing a string may have been interpreted to mean that the entire word can be "a string" of characters that is replaced by another entire word in the second language.

Initially, Applicant thanks Examiner Knepper for discussing the Office Action with Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone on or about March 21, 2008. As explained in more detail herein, Applicant's attorney explained that the present invention is not directed to the translation of a word in one language to a word in another language, and proposed removing the potentially confusing "translating" terms in the claims. The Examiner was receptive to this approach but indicated that an updated search may be required, so that no agreement was reached. Nevertheless, Applicant believes the interview will facilitate prosecution.

The present amendments to the independent claims remove Applicant's next previous amendment, which was not persuasive, and remove references to "translator" or "translating." Thus, in claim 1, the phrase "a spelling translator for automatically translating" is changed to "means for automatically converting" to avoid any misunderstanding that may be associated with the use of the word "translating" or the like. Support for this amendment is found, for example, in Para. 7-11, 26, and 33 of the

application. In addition, the reference to the words “or string” in the language describing “a character or string in the original text item” is deleted to avoid a misinterpretation that the invention merely translates words. Support for this amendment is found, for example, in Figs. 4A and 4B (showing a character from the original text item on the left) and Para. 28-29.

Thus, Applicant’s claim 1 as amended recites an automated voice generator that takes a text item in a first language and generates a voice output in the pronunciation of a second language. More specifically, a character in the original text item that is not included in the second language is automatically replaced by a converting means with a character or string in the second language that has an equivalent or similar pronunciation to the pronunciation of the character in the first language. The new text item, which includes the replacement character or string, is then output by pronouncing the new text item according to the pronunciation of the second language.

Applicant’s invention provides an advantage over conventional TTS engines, because Applicant’s invention reduces the languages needed to provide voice outputs in response to multilingual text items. For example, even if place names are in French, German and English, Applicant’s invention can be used to provide voice outputs of all of the place names using only the pronunciation in one language, e.g., English. (Application, e.g., at ¶¶ 7-9, 12, 31.)

As an example of the operation of Applicant’s invention, Fig. 4B depicts a German-to-English rule table by which a German character not included in the English alphabet is replaced by an English character or string having a pronunciation equivalent or similar to the pronunciation of the German character. Thus, the German character “ß” is replaced by the English character string “ss.” Applying this rule in an example, the German word “Straße” is changed to “strasse” and pronounced in that form in English. Thus, Applicant’s invention does not translate the original word into another language (“Straße” would be translated as “street” in English), but rather converts character pronunciations so that the original text item can be pronounced using the second language.

Applicant submits that the cited art does not affect the patentability of the claimed invention. Renegar does not provide an automated system or method for

replacing a character in an original text item in a first language that is not included in a second, output language with a character or string in the second language that has an equivalent or similar pronunciation. Moreover, Renegar does not disclose a means or method of providing a voice output by pronouncing the new text item according to the pronunciation of the second language.

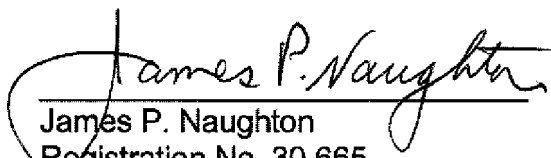
Independent claims 7, 11, and 16 are amended like claim 1 and similarly distinguish over the cited art.

Regarding independent claim 16, Renegar also does not disclose a navigation apparatus, a map database for storing geographic information containing a place name text item representing each place name, or a means for reading out a place name text item from the map database. The passage apparently relied on the Office Action (col. 13, lines 40-67) describes a Destination Locator section 37 of the Renegar product (see Fig. 3) that displays words to allow a user to formulate questions to "navigate," e.g., words such as "go" and "turn"; distance entries such as "block" and "mile"; and directions such as "left," "across from," and "north." There is no map database, or collection of place names, or means for reading out place names.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the claims as amended are patentable over the cited art, and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of this application.

If the Examiner believes the application still is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call Applicant's undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4723.

Respectfully submitted,


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